

MISSISSIPPI INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR

MISSISSIPPI HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

ISSUE DATE:	May 23, 2012
QUESTIONS DUE BY:	June 5, 2012; 4:00 PM
PROPOSAL DUE DATE and TIME:	June 13, 2012; 3:00 PM Central Time
LOCATION OF BID OPENING:	Mississippi Insurance Department 501 North West Street, Suite 1001 Woolfolk Building Jackson, MS 39201

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND AMENDMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFP WILL BE POSTED AT:

<http://www.mid.state.ms.us/>

THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT VENDORS WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH VENDOR TO PERIODICALLY CHECK:

[http:// www.mid.state.ms.us/](http://www.mid.state.ms.us/)

FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND AMENDMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RFP:

Contact: Liz Barnett
Phone: 601-359-3657
Email: liz.barnett@mid.state.ms.us

RFP Response Checklist

RFP Response Checklist: These items **MUST** be included in your response to this RFP:

_____	1) One clearly marked original response and 4 identical copies of the complete proposal. Please DO NOT include a copy of the RFP.
_____	2) Proposal Transmittal Letter Including the required vendor information: 1. Mississippi Department of Revenue Business Account Number (if any) 2. Total Bid amount 3. Name and title of person who would sign the contract 4. Name and title of the company contact person (if different) 5. Contact person: direct telephone number, fax number & email address
_____	3) Experience and Qualifications
_____	4) Business History and References
_____	5) Examples of Successful Products and Services Rendered
_____	6) Cost Proposal
_____	7) Acknowledgement and Commitment to Contract Time Period for Phase I and Phase II
_____	8) Scope of Work
_____	9) Contract Budget and Timelines
_____	10) Acknowledgement of all items in Appendix A

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MID is seeking professional services for the development of a statewide community outreach strategy and campaign to inform the citizens of the State about the Mississippi Health Insurance Exchange. The comprehensive plan includes developing community education strategies and conducting local outreach activities that are consumer-friendly and engaging to reach the diverse population of Mississippi.

B. BACKGROUND

On March 23, 2010, the President signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“PPACA”). On March 30, 2010, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 was signed into law. These laws, collectively referred to as the Affordable Care Act, include laws designed to expand coverage, to provide more health care choices, to enhance the quality of care for all Americans, to hold companies more accountable, and to lower health care costs. Among these provisions, is the opportunity for each state to establish a Health Insurance Exchange (“Exchange”) by January 1, 2014, that will 1) facilitate the purchase of qualified health plans; 2) provide for the establishment of a Small Business Health Options Program (“SHOP Exchange”) designed to assist qualified employers in facilitating the enrollment of their employees in qualified health plans offered in the SHOP Exchange; and 3) meet other requirements specified in PPACA.

Mississippi received a Federal grant for the period August 15, 2011 through August 14, 2012, to begin establishment activities for a health insurance Exchange. Please see Appendix B for the Project Abstract included in Mississippi’s *Cooperative Agreement to Support Establishment of State-Operated Health Insurance Exchanges* Level I grant application. The entire grant application is posted on MID’s website:

http://www.mid.state.ms.us/pages/health_care_reform.aspx

MID anticipates submitting an application for additional Federal funds to continue this project through 2013. This project will be conducted in two Phases, pre-operational and post-implementation of the Mississippi Health Insurance Exchange. MID is currently developing and designing the initial branding package and messaging for the Exchange. Education and outreach materials will be developed on an on-going basis and can be customized by the vendor for this community education and outreach project.

SECTION 2: RFP GUIDELINES

A. ADMINISTRATION OF THE RFP

This RFP is issued by the Mississippi Insurance Department. All letters of intent should be submitted in writing to the Grant Project Director:

Aaron Sisk, Senior Attorney
Grant Project Director
Mississippi Insurance Department
501 North West Street, Suite 1001
Woolfolk Building
Jackson, MS 39201
Telephone: (601) 359-3577
Fax: (601) 359-2474
E-Mail: aaron.sisk@mid.state.ms.us

B. PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

The proposed timetable is as follows:

Request for proposal issued: May 23, 2012

Written questions due: June 5, 2012; 3:00 PM

Responses to questions due: June 8, 2012; 5:00 PM

Closing date for receipt of proposals: June 13, 2012; 3:00 PM Central Time

Bid opening: June 13, 2012; 4:00 PM

Target Award date: June 18, 2012

Target date for finalized contract: July 15, 2012

C. COMMUNICATIONS

From the issue date of this RFP until a Contractor is selected and announced, vendors may communicate only with the Grants Manager for questions, information and clarification. RFP questions must be submitted in writing no later than June 5, 2012; 3:00 PM:

Liz Barnett
Grants Manager
Mississippi Insurance Department
501 North West Street, Suite 1001
Woolfolk Building
Jackson, MS 39201
liz.barnett@mid.state.ms.us

D. PROPOSALS

1. General Guidelines

- a) Costs for the development of proposals are the sole responsibility of the vendors. All proposals become the property of the State of Mississippi.
- b) Vendors must include a statement in the proposal certifying that the price was determined without any conflict of interest.
- c) Vendors must acknowledge and agree to all requirements listed in Appendix A for contracting for services with the Mississippi Insurance Department.
- d) Proposals **MUST BE IN WRITING OR WRITTEN**. This is required.
- e) The vendor shall provide one original signed copy that is marked **ORIGINAL**.

- f) Four (4) additional printed copies of the proposal must be submitted with the ORIGINAL in a sealed package marked "MISSISSIPPI HEALTH INSURANCE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROPOSAL".

NOTE: Please provide one copy of the four copies loose-leaf bound.

Package must be addressed exactly as stated below in D.1.g).

- g) Proposals and attachments shall be mailed or delivered by the due date of June 13, 2012; 3:00 PM Central Time and must include on the outside of the package the following:

**ATTENTION: BID ENCLOSED - CONFIDENTIAL
DO NOT OPEN**

Aaron Sisk, Senior Attorney
Grant Project Director
Mississippi Insurance Department
501 North West Street, Suite 1001
Woolfolk Building
Jackson, MS 39201

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

2. Proposal Format

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing straightforward, concise descriptions of how the vendor proposes to meet the requirements of the RFP. There is no page limit, but vendors should use reasonable judgment in this regard.

3. Transmittal Letter

To be considered, the proposal must be accompanied by a transmittal letter on company letterhead, signed in ink by an official of the bidding organization authorized to bind the vendor to the provisions of the proposal. The signed transmittal letter must be included in the proposal marked ORIGINAL. It must include a statement that any contract terms spelled out in this RFP would be acceptable if a contract were awarded. The transmittal letter **must also** be accompanied by a "Vendor Information Sheet" containing the following:

VENDOR INFORMATION SHEET

1. Name of the company or individual
2. Mailing address
3. Street address (for FEDEX or other mail service)
4. Company Federal ID Number (or if an individual, social security number)
5. Mississippi Department of Revenue Business Account Number (if any)
6. Total Bid amount
7. Name and title of person who would sign the contract
8. Name and title of the company contact person (if different)
9. Contact person: direct telephone number, fax number & email address

4. Experience and Qualifications

MID is seeking consultants who have certain experience and qualifications. MID will accept proposals from qualified public relations agencies or firms who have the following minimum capabilities:

1. Demonstrated experience with developing and conducting community outreach projects in Mississippi;
2. Demonstrated experience in conducting education and outreach campaigns to targeted populations;
3. Demonstrated experience in communicating State-wide programs to local communities;
4. Demonstrated experience in utilizing multiple forms of media to accomplish education and outreach campaigns in Mississippi; and
5. Account services in Mississippi.

Please provide:

1. Resumes for all persons proposed to work on this project, including offeror's company profile and number of years in business to be attached in an appendix.
2. The existing staff, equipment, and facilities currently available to perform the services or that will be made available at the time of contracting.

5. Offeror's principal place of business, and if different, the place of performance of the proposed contract.

6. Age of the offeror's business and average number of employees in the past year.

7. References and Previous Work

The Vendor must provide at least three (3) references and recommendations from other clients. Required information includes customer contact name, address, telephone number, email address, and length of time the account has been a reference. Also list any contracts similar in scope, size, or discipline to the required services in this request. Reference Forms are included in Appendix C. The Vendor must make arrangements in advance with the account references so that they may be contacted at the Project team's convenience without further clearance or Vendor intercession. The reference information available to the State will be used as follows:

1. As documentation supporting mandatory experience requirements for companies, products, and/or individuals, as required in this RFP.
2. To confirm the capabilities and quality as a Vendor, product, or individual for the proposal deemed lowest and best, prior to finalizing the award.

8. Examples of Successful Products and Services Rendered

At least five (5) examples of successful education and outreach campaigns, educational products produced, and outreach services rendered.

9. Proposed Budget

Cost proposals should be included in this Request for Proposals and should include estimates for each Phase of service requested along with a total. The proposed budget should respond to the requirements set out in the Scope of Work and itemized for each deliverable. It should not be assumed that the any estimated budget of MID's Exchange Establishment Grant received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would be the actual amount for this project. Due to the variable nature of the services required, vendors must include hourly rates for each staff class.

The Contractor must agree to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi's electronic payment and remittance vehicle. MID agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi law on "Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies," Mississippi Code Annotated §31-7-301, which generally provides for payment of undisputed amounts by MID within forty-five (45) days of receipt of invoice.

10. Contract Time Period

A standard MID professional services contract will be executed with the winning vendor. It is estimated that the Phase I of the contract for this project will begin July 15, 2012 and end August 14, 2012. Phase II is anticipated to begin on August 15, 2012 and end December 31, 2013, depending on the availability of Federal funds. The proposal should confirm this time period and ensure commitment to begin performing services for Phase I immediately following the finalized contract. The proposal should also confirm that work will be completed and all deliverables submitted to MID by the end of each Phase of the contract period.

The agency has the option to renew the contract up to two (2) one-year periods at the same prices, terms and conditions as the original contract. Written notice by the Agency to the Consultant of such intent must be at least sixty (60) days prior to the anniversary date. The Consultant has ten (10) days to agree to the optional renewal or decline to renew the contract.

11. Discussions

Discussions may be conducted with offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible to being selected for award. The discussions shall be for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the solicitation requirements. In conducting these discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any information derived from competing offers. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. Revision of proposals may be permitted after submissions and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers.

12. Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal shall be evaluated based on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	POINTS
Proposed Scope of Work and Proposed Plans- The overall quality of the proposed plan for performing the required services reflecting an understanding of the project and its objectives.	25
The ability to perform the services based on previous demonstrated experience and record of past performance of similar work.	20
Examples of successful outreach products and services rendered.	10
Proposed budget and total cost.	15
The qualifications and abilities of personnel proposed to perform the services.	15
The ability to begin performing the services and the commitment to complete the scope of work and to provide the required deliverables specified in the contract period.	5
Completeness of response to the specific requirements of the solicitation.	5
Any proposed “value added” service or product.	5
TOTAL POINTS	100

13. Award

Award shall be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in this Request for Proposals.

The selected Contractor will work directly with the Grant Project Staff in performing the tasks for this project. Specific project oversight and direction will be provided by the Grant Project Director, Aaron Sisk.

The successful vendor for this project may also bid on any future RFPs for implementation and/or operation of an Exchange.

14. General Terms of Ownership

The State shall own and retain unlimited rights to use, disclose, or duplicate all information and data developed, derived, documented, stored, or furnished by the Contractor under the contract. Any models or materials used that are proprietary, trade secret, or confidential information and developed with funds other than funds under this contract may remain as

proprietary or confidential. The vendor must identify and explain any portions of their proposals as confidential prior to submission.

15. Confidentiality of Information

The Contractor, its officers, agents and employees, and subs, shall treat all information, which is obtained by it through its performance under a Contract, as confidential information to the extent required by the laws of the State of Mississippi and the United States. Individual identifiable information shall not be disclosed without prior written approval of the Grant Project Director. The use of information obtained by the Contractor in the performance of its duties under this agreement shall be limited to purposes directly related to the requirements of the contract.

15. Proprietary Information

The offeror/proposer should mark any and all pages of the proposal considered to be proprietary information which may remain confidential in accordance with Section 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 of the Mississippi Code. Any pages not marked accordingly will be subject to review by the general public after award of the contract. Requests to review the proprietary information will be handled in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

16. Prospective Contractor's Representation Regarding Contingent Fees

The following statement is required to be placed in prospective vendor's response proposal:

The prospective contractor represents as a part of such contractor's proposal that such contractor (use applicable word ***has or has not***) retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure a contract.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

The individual components in the Scope of Work must be addressed in the proposal. Objective measures of success, and specific dates and milestones with deliverables shall be achieved.

The overall goal of this project is to effectively educate the target populations about the upcoming Mississippi Health Insurance Exchange. Mississippi's diverse population includes, but is not limited to:

- Low income and underserved populations;
- Individuals and families with different education levels;
- Special populations (including individuals who live in rural areas, small businesses who operate in rural areas, seasonal workers, Native American Indians, etc.);
- Other "hard-to-reach" populations; and
- Young adults ages 19-30 years.

The proposal should address a customized approach for each region of the State to facilitate maximum exposure. Various types of communications will be needed in order to effectively reach

the target populations. Proposals should outline the customized approach and provide details for implementation.

Partnerships with trusted community institutions and organizations are critical to campaign success and reaching the maximum number of people. Proposed activities should include, but are not limited to, partnerships with:

- Community-based organizations;
- Non-profit organizations;
- Community service organizations;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Health care Advocacy groups;
- Health care providers, clinics, emergency room hospitals in rural areas;
- Businesses and retailers serving the targeted uninsured populations; and
- Colleges and Universities.

DELIVERABLES

The proposal should address a comprehensive and effective short-term (pre-operational) campaign and a long-term (post-implementation) outreach strategy and campaign plan to be accomplished in two phases.

The vendor should address the activities it will undertake to perform the Project Scope of Work to complete the following Deliverables:

I. Phase I: Comprehensive and Effective Pre-Operational Public Awareness Plan

Phase I will address the proposed initial local community public awareness/education campaign for the upcoming Mississippi Health Insurance Exchange. This phase will focus on activities to create interest and raise awareness of the upcoming Exchange. Activities with specific measurable outcomes should be proposed. Phase I will begin when the contract is executed and end on August 14, 2012.

II. Phase II: Comprehensive and Effective Implementation Education Plan

Phase II will address the actual implementation and availability of Mississippi's Health Insurance Exchange. Phase II would begin August 15, 2012 and end December 31, 2013. The proposal shall provide detailed descriptions and explanations on the types of additional activities that need to be implemented in the calendar year of 2013. Proposals should include outreach strategies that can be used by local trusted organizations to educate and inform individuals and families about the opportunity to obtain comprehensive health care benefits through the Exchange and other state affordable health insurance programs.

The proposed education activities should ensure that communications are easily understood by the targeted audience in the least burdensome manner. The outreach strategies should promote trust and confidence between the target populations and the programs offering affordable health coverage. For example, individuals and families must perceive the

application and enrollment processes as being a positive opportunity for them to obtain comprehensive health care benefits.

SECTION 4: CONTRACT BUDGET AND TIMELINES

The proposal should include a proposed detailed budget outlining the number of proposed personnel along with hourly rates and estimates of hours, travel costs, supplies, and other costs associated with the required work to be performed. It is expected that the Vendor will hold regular conference calls with MID and schedule any necessary in-person meetings with MID project staff.

Vendors should propose the timelines applicable to complete the required Scope of Work. A comprehensive timeline that addresses all tasks and deliverables is preferred for each of the two Phases.

APPENDIX A

The following requirements for contractual services must be acknowledged and agreed upon by the vendor:

I. APPLICABLE LAW

The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the state. The Vendor shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

II. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of the Mississippi Insurance Department to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt of state and/or federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at anytime, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds or of the State of Mississippi to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to the Mississippi Insurance Department, the Mississippi Insurance Department shall have the right upon ten (10) working days to provide written notice to the Contractor, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expense to the Mississippi Insurance Department of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.

III. PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS

The contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Personal Services Contract Review Board Regulations, a copy of which is available at 210 East Capitol Street, Suite 800, Jackson, MS 39201, for inspection.

IV. INFORMALITIES AND IRREGULARITIES

The Mississippi Insurance Department has the right to waive minor defects or variations of a bid from the exact requirements of the specifications that do not affect the price, quality, quantity, delivery, or performance time of the services being procured. If insufficient information is submitted by a vendor with the bid for the Mississippi Insurance Department to properly evaluate the bid, the Mississippi Insurance Department has the right to require such additional information as it may deem necessary after the time set for receipt of bids, provided that the information requested does not change the price, quality, quantity, delivery, or performance time of the services being procured.

V. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The Contractor understands that the Mississippi Insurance Department is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, State, or local laws. All

such discrimination is unlawful and the Contractor agrees during the term of the agreement that the Contractor will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services. The Contractor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, State of Mississippi, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Contractor shall agree to assure the confidentiality of any records obtained from the State Personnel Board as required by state and federal privacy laws. No information, documents or other material provided to or prepared by the Contractor deemed confidential by MID pursuant to State and Federal privacy laws, shall be made available to any person or organization without the prior approval of MID. Any liability resulting from the wrongful disclosure of confidential information on the part of the Contractor shall rest with the Contractor.

VII. STOP WORK ORDER

1. *Order to Stop Work.* The Procurement Officer, may, by written order to the Contractor at any time, and without notice to any surety, require the Contractor to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a specified period not exceeding 90 days after the order is delivered to the Contractor, unless the parties agree to any further period. Any such order shall be identified specifically as a stop work order issued pursuant to this clause. Upon receipt of such an order, the Contractor shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize the occurrence of costs allocable to the work covered by the order during the period of work stoppage. Before the stop work order expires, or within any further period to which the parties shall have agreed, the procurement officer shall either:
 - A. cancel the stop work order; or,
 - B. terminate the work covered by such order as provided in the Termination for Default Clause-or the Termination for Convenience Clause of this contract.
2. **Cancellation or Expiration of the Order:** If a stop work order issued under this clause is cancelled at any time during the period specified in the order, or if the period of the order or any extension thereof expires, the Contractor shall have the right to resume work. An appropriate adjustment shall be made in the delivery schedule or Contractor price, or both, and the contract shall be modified in writing accordingly, if:
 - A. the stop work order results in an increase in the time required for the performance of any part of this contract; and,
 - B. the Contractor asserts a claim for such an adjustment within 30 days after the end of the period of work stoppage; provided that, if the procurement officer decides that the facts justify such action, any such claim asserted may be received and acted upon at any time prior to final payment under this contract.
3. **Termination of Stopped Work:** If a stop work order is not cancelled and the work covered by such order is terminated for default or convenience, the reasonable costs resulting from the stop work order shall be allowed by adjustment or otherwise.

VIII. REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES

The Contractor represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a State contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in the contractor's bid or proposal.

IX. REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRATUITIES

The vendor, offeror, or Contractor represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 7-204 (Gratuities) of the *Mississippi Personal Service Contract Rules and Regulations*.

X. AMENDMENTS TO REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

Amendments to Requests for Proposals may be made in accordance with the Mississippi Personal Services Contract Review Board Rules and Regulations, Section 3-202.08 (Amendments to Invitations for Bids) prior to submission of proposals. After submission of proposals, amendments may be made in accordance with Section 3-202.19.2 (Procedure for Phase One of Multi-Step Sealed Bidding, Amendments to the Invitation for Bids).

XI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AMENDMENTS

Vendors shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the bid, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by the Mississippi Insurance Department by the time and at the place specified for receipt of bids.

XII. CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION

The vendor certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other vendor or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a bid, or the methods or factors used to calculate the prices bid.

XIII. E-VERIFICATION

Contractor represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act, Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 71-11-1 and 71-11-3, and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. The term "employee" as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, "status verification system" means the legal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. Contractor agrees to maintain records of such compliance and, upon request of the State, to provide a copy of each such verification to the State. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws of these warranties, the breach of which may subject Contractor to the following:

1. termination of this Agreement and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public;
2. the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year; or,
3. both--in the event of such termination/cancellation, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit.

IX. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The offeror/proposer should mark any and all pages of the proposal considered to be proprietary information which may remain confidential in accordance with Section 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 of the Mississippi Code. Any pages not marked accordingly will be subject to review by the general public after award of the contract. Requests to review the proprietary information will be handled in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

APPENDIX B

MID HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE ESTABLISHMENT GRANT

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Application title: Mississippi's Cooperative Agreement to Support Establishment of State-Operated Health Insurance Exchanges

Applicant: Mississippi Insurance Department

Funding opportunity number: IE-HBE-11-004

Project Director: Aaron Sisk

Address: 501 North West Street, Suite 1001, Jackson, MS 39201

Congressional district(s) served: State of Mississippi

Project Director phone and fax numbers: 601-359- 3569: 601-359-2474

Email address: aaron.sisk@mid.state.ms.us

Organizational Website address: www.mid.state.ms.us

Category of Funding: Level I

Projected date for project completion: August 30, 2012

The Mississippi Insurance Department's ("MID") mission is to *impartially and fairly enforce the laws and regulations enumerated in Miss. Code Ann., § 83-1-1, et. seq., thereby creating a competitive marketplace for the sale of insurance products and services while providing the State's citizens with the maximum amount of consumer protection.* As the regulatory authority over all health insurance policies sold in the State of Mississippi and because MID will have integral involvement with the Exchange, MID is applying for a Level One Establishment Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") to further its planning for the establishment of a state-operated health benefit Exchange.

Mississippi has a total population of 2,951,996 persons. Of this population, 532,993 are currently uninsured. Mississippi's Exchange will serve an extremely diverse audience as the needs of Mississippians differ by region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the state's residents live in rural areas and the State ranks last in the United States in the percentage of people who use the Internet inside or outside of the home. Despite these challenges, Mississippi will use the awarded grant funds to meet the following program objectives:

A: Exchange Establishment Core Areas: Mississippi will use the requested funds to perform activities intended to allow the Exchange to meet, at a minimum, the required Exchange Establishment core areas.

B: Demonstrating Progress Toward Milestones: Mississippi will establish well defined milestones, organized under each of the aforesaid core areas, to be met by the Exchange. Please see the Work Plan attached hereto as Section E.

C: Early Deliverables: In order to be certified by HHS by January 1, 2013, Mississippi is committed to carry out the activities required to establish a health benefit exchange on an expedited schedule. MID has completed research regarding the existing health insurance market in the State and will use this research to create a market driven state-based Exchange with a web portal geared toward consumers. Mississippi will conduct an extensive public education and outreach program to inform consumers about access to health insurance through the Exchange. MID will continue to coordinate with Medicaid, CHIP and other appropriate programs regarding eligibility determination and other Exchange activities.

D: Providing Assistance to Individuals and Small Business, Coverage of Appeals and Complaints: Providing assistance to individuals and small businesses is a priority and an essential element of a well-functioning Exchange. Mississippi will utilize grant funds to provide assistance to individuals and small businesses through existing consumer assistance programs. A navigator program will be developed and integrated into Exchange operations to assist consumers in their interactions with the Exchange.

E: Exchange Certification: Mississippi will develop a highly functioning and sustainable Exchange and will work with HHS toward certification of that Exchange by January 1, 2013. MID will show progress in the establishment of a state-operated Exchange based on timely completion of each milestone in the proposed work plan.

APPENDIX C

REFERENCE FORM

Complete Reference Forms for each reference.

Contact Name:

Company Name:

Address:

Phone #:

E-Mail:

Project Start Date:

Project End Date:

Description of product/services/project, including start and end dates:

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List of any contracts similar in scope, size, or discipline to the required services in this request:

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